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Naval Air Station - Navy Yard Gate  
South Avenue near the intersection  
of West Avenue  
Pensacola Naval Air Station  
Pensacola  
Escambia County  
Florida

HABS No. FLA-142

HABS

FLA.

17-PENSA

1-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. FLA-142

NAVAL AIR STATION  
NAVY YARD GATEHABS  
FLA  
17-PENSA  
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Location: South Avenue near the intersection of West Avenue, Pensacola Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Escambia County, Florida.

Present Owner and Occupant: United States Navy

Present Use: Storage for paint

Statement of Significance: The gatehouses and the gate piers flanked the main entrance to the Navy Yard, which had a brick security wall. The village of Warrington which developed beyond this gateway, like Woolsey village to the north, has been razed as has sections of the wall.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: By an 1824 act of Congress a Navy Depot was created at Pensacola and was established on eighty acres secured from the Territory of Florida. The property has been owned continuously by the Federal Government except during the Civil War when the Yard was held by the Confederates until early in 1862.
2. Date of erection: The wall was constructed after 1827 and is indicated on a plat of the Yard of 1836.
3. Architect: Unknown
4. Original plans and construction information: The Navy Yard, which was bounded on the south and east by Pensacola Bay, was enclosed on the west and the north with an 11'-5" high brick wall which extended into the bay at the terminal ends. The main gateway in the west wall had a vehicular opening defined by double piers which were flanked by pedestrian openings. A pair of arched, nine panel gates were hung from the inner piers which also supported an elliptically arched overthrow, which in turn supported a lantern. The double piers were separated by sections of brick walling. Single gates with nine panels were hung between the piers flanking the pedestrian openings.

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5. Alterations and additions: During the Federal bombardments and the Confederate evacuation fires of May 9, 1862, much of the Navy Yard was destroyed which may have included the wall. Like other Yard structures, it may have been rebuilt after 1868. Early twentieth century hurricanes demolished much of the west wall which extended into the bay. Sea-plane ramps and hangers and additions to the brig structure resulted in the demolition of the wall from the shoreline to the Warrington gateway. Similar construction resulted in the demolition of the Woolsey gateway and sections of the north wall which were entirely removed at the northwest corner to accommodate a new roadway for the Naval Air Station which presently incorporates the sites of the Warrington and Woolsey villages. Part of the west wall became the rear wall of a warehouse structure. In 1932 the gates, the overthrow, and the inner piers of the Warrington gateway were removed to provide a South Avenue-Dallas Street thoroughfare through the piers.
6. Important old views: On page 23 of A New Light on Florida, Pensacola, (The Naples of America), and Its Surroundings Illustrated, Sept. 1877, compiled by W. D. Chipley, General Manager of the Pensacola Railroad, originally published by the Courier-Journal Press, Louisville, Kentucky, and reprinted in 1962 by the T. T. Wentworth Museum, Pensacola, Florida, is a wood cut engraving of the Warrington gateway, miscaptioned as the "Woolsey Entrance to Navy Yard, Pensacola." The buildings in background, seen through the open gates, have been identified as Buildings 25 and 1 (HABS Nos. FLA-236 and 237) of the Naval Air Station. Their location, as related to the pictured gates, indicates the correct nomenclature.

- B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure: Andrew Jackson was instrumental in recommending the site of Pensacola for a Naval station to provide protection for the Gulf coast. An act of Congress on May 24, 1824, established the station. The following year on March 3, the Secretary of the Navy appointed commissioners, three Navy captains, Biddle, Bainbridge and Warrington, to select the site at Pensacola, which had a suitable harbor, adjacent live oak forests necessary for ship building, and the ruin of Bateria de San Antonio which was adapted as the nucleus for the fortification of the port. Early construction on the Yard is undocumented, though expenditures from the initial 1827 congressional appropriations to 1842 totaled more than one half million dollars. The Mexican War generated considerable activity at the base and with the construction of Forts Pickens, McRee, Barrancas and Redoubt, the area was of importance during the Civil War.

After the war the Navy Yard was largely reconstructed, having been severely damaged, in the 1870's and continued to function until it was closed in 1911. The site was reopened a few years later as the Pensacola Naval Air Station.

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C. Sources of Information:

1. Primary and unpublished sources: See the 1972 HABS Pensacola Naval Air Station Project data.
2. Secondary and published sources: John Appleyard Agency (ed.), "Pensacola's Navy Yard--1528-1911," Pensacola: 1967.

Prepared by Rodd L. Wheaton  
1973

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

- A. General Description: The brick gate piers designate vehicular and pedestrian traffic lanes and are flanked with small attached gatehouses. The condition of the fabric is good.
- B. Description of Exterior:
  1. Overall dimensions: The gateway is approximately 12'-0" deep by 92'-0" long which includes the gatehouses. The north and south pedestrian openings are 7'-1" wide and the central vehicular opening is 30'-5" wide. The gatehouses are approximately 10'-3" square and extend the 11'-5" height of the wall.
  2. Foundations: No foundations are visible, though they are probably of brick.
  3. Wall construction, finish and color: The brick masonry of the piers, gatehouses, and the intermediate east faces of the wall are stuccoed and painted a yellow tint. Each pedestrian opening is flanked with approximately 3'-0" square piers which are 17'-10" high and have corbelled masonry caps, each surmounted by a cannonball finial which appear to be metal. The 14 3/4" thick wall has a granite cap and is typically unpainted at the west face. The gatehouses, which project from the east face of the wall, have plain corner pilasters with a watertable which, with the entablature, form panels at each elevation. Brick dentils are applied under the entablature between the pilasters.

4. Structural system: Typically the gatehouses have 3" x 4" circular sawn rafters, 32" on center, and 3" x 4" circular sawn joists, 16" to 18" on center. The north gatehouse joists have been dropped approximately 10" below the original joist pockets. HABS FLA 17-PENSA 1-
5. Porches: None
6. Chimneys: None
7. Openings:
- a. Doorways and doors: The gatehouse doorways, with granite lintels and sills, face one another. The north gatehouse has a mortise and tenon, four panel door with plain trim. A transom with diamond patterned glazing is set over the door. The south gatehouse has a modern door with four horizontal panels and a louvered transom. Granite lintels are set over the pedestrian gateways and are painted yellow similar to the walling. Granite stops for single gates are located in the appropriate inside faces of the piers of the pedestrian gateways.
  - b. Windows: Each gatehouse has two window openings with flush granite lintels and projecting granite sills. The north window of the north gatehouse has modern six-over-six light sash. The east window of the same structure has nine-over-one light sash. The windows of the south gatehouse have four-over-four light sash and still retain on the interior five iron bars in each opening imbedded  $2\frac{1}{2}$ " into the sills and lintels. All the exterior woodwork is painted dark brown.
8. Roof:
- a. Shape and covering: The roofs of the gatehouses are flat and have corrugated sheet metal over wood roof sheathing which varies from 10" to 14" wide.
  - b. Cornice and eaves: The plain, squared cornice is an integral part of the stuccoed, corbelled brick entablature.
- C. Description of Interior:
- 1. Floor plans: Each gatehouse is a single space.
  - 2. Stairway: None

3. Flooring: The flooring of the north gatehouse is wood with  $5\frac{1}{2}$ " wide boards extending 30" into the structure and is completed with  $3\frac{1}{2}$ " wide boards. The flooring of the south gatehouse is concrete, painted gray. HABS FLA 17-PENSA 1-
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls of the north gatehouse are stuccoed and painted gray. The rafters and joists are exposed and unpainted. The walls of the south gatehouse are paneled with  $\frac{1}{4}$ " plywood which is painted a light green.
5. Doorways and doors: None
6. Decorative features: None
7. Notable hardware: There are wrought iron hinge sections on the piers.
8. Mechanical equipment: None
- D. Site and Surroundings: The gateway faces east and west with the gatehouses projecting from the east face of the walling into the Old Navy Yard. There are several brig structures and compounds to the north and the south of the concrete sidewalks and asphalt paved roadway. Maintaining the gateway and tending the surrounding patches of lawn is part of the duties of the incarcerated.

Prepared by F. Blair Reeves, AIA  
HABS--Pensacola  
August 1968

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HABS--Pensacola NAS  
August 1972

### PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project, sponsored by the Pensacola Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission, now known as the Historic Pensacola Preservation Board of Trustees, in cooperation with the Historic American Buildings Survey, was recorded during the summer of 1968 in Pensacola under the direction of James C. Massey, Chief of HABS; Professor F. Blair Reeves, AIA (University of Florida), Project Supervisor; and Student Assistant Architects John O. Crosby (University of Florida), David L. Van de Ven, Jr. (Texas Technological College), and Edward Bondi, Jr. (University of Florida). The historical information was prepared by Professor Samuel

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Proctor (University of Florida), by Assistant Historian Linda V. Ellsworth (Historic Pensacola Preservation Board), and by Rodd L. Wheaton (Architect, HABS) who edited all the data in 1972.

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